Burden on income tax payers

*15. SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that only 2 per cent of the country's population is income tax assessee who pay income tax for the 98 per cent of non-tax paying population;

(b) if so, whether more burden by imposing 2 per cent surcharge on the existing income tax payers is justified;

(c) if not, whether this will encourage people to shy away from becoming honest tax payers; and

(d) if so, the action taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN): (a) The total number of income tax assessees as on 31st January, 2002 is 2.82 crores which works out to slightly more than 2 per cent of the country's population.

(b) The surcharge of 2 per cent was levied by the Union Government through Finance Act, 2001 for providing relief and rehabilitation to the quake-hit areas of Gujarat. In view of the unprecedented disaster and in view of the fact that surcharge can be levied only on the existing tax payers, the surcharge cannot be said to be unjustified.

(c) and (d) Do not arise in view of (b) above.

World heritage sites

*16. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH 'SURYA': Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have failed to get any of its sites declared as World Heritage Site this year also;

(b) if so, whether it was due to delay in submitting the request to UNESCO;

(c) if so, whether any responsibility for this lapse has been fixed;

(d) if so, the action proposed against those guilty; and

(e) if not, by when it would be done?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN): (a) and (b) No nomination was submitted in 2000, therefore, no Indian site came up for consideration before the World Heritage Committee in December, 2001.

(c) to (e) *Prima facie*, there have been some lapses in submitting and processing of the proposals. An administrative inquiry has been ordered to fix the responsibility for the lapses.

Allotment of LPG dealership in H.P.

†*17. SHRI ANIL SHARMA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the allotment of LPG dealership is done arbitrarily by the Oil and Gas Board in the rural/urban areas of Himachal Pradesh;

(b) whether it is also a fact that in the process of allotment of such dearlership, S.C. unemployed graduate ladies and widows of martyrs are not considered; if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) in which manner oil/gas is made available in the remote areas of Himachal Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) The selection of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) distributorships is carried out by the Dealer Selection Boards (DSBs). The Government have laid down uniform guidelines for selection in a fair and transparent manner. Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) make the allotment of LPG distributorships on the recommendations of DSBs.

(b) The reservation norms in different categories for selection of

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.